

EXHIBIT 6
DATE 3/26/09
SB 470

Senate Bill 470
March 26, 2009
Presented by Chris Smith
House Fish, Wildlife & Parks Committee

Mr. Chairman and Committee members, for the record I am Chris Smith, Deputy Director of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP).

In Montana, there are presently five unlimited big horn sheep hunting districts where harvest is controlled by a quota of rams taken rather than limiting the number of permits issued. These districts provide an opportunity for any hunter to pursue a big horn sheep without having to draw a limited permit, for which the odds are extremely limited ($<1\%$ = 21,733 applications for 153 either sex permits). Although more remote and harder to hunt than limited districts, unlimited sheep districts typically have small quotas and consequently, relatively short seasons.

The current, seven year waiting period for anyone who kills a sheep in an unlimited area was adopted by the legislature in 1993. SB 470 would reduce the waiting period from seven years to three years.

During the period 2001, through 2007, the average number of hunters purchasing unlimited licenses was 183. Reducing the waiting period from 7 years to 3 would increase the potential number of hunters in the field by about 40 hunters, statewide, assuming all successful hunters resumed hunting as soon as they were eligible under the new law.